

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BISSAU 00967 120827Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 AGR-01 EB-08 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 IO-14 /061 W

-----073551 130741Z /12

R 110830Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY BISSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1394

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY PRAIA

UNCLAS BISSAU 0967

ROME FOR FODAG

E. O: 11652:N/A

TAGS: EAGR, SENV, PU

SUBJ: GUINEA-BISSAU RAINFALL - 1978

SUMMARY: AFTER A YEAR OF SERIOUS DROUGHT, THIS YEAR'S RAINY SEASON APPEARS TO BE SEEKING TO MAKE UP FOR LAST YEAR'S FAILURE WITH A VENGEANCE. END SUMMARY

1. THE BEGINNING OF THE RAINY SEASON FOR GUINEA-BISSAU SEEMS TO HOLD PROMISE FOR THIS YEAR'S RICE AND PEANUT CROPS, THE BASIS OF THE ECONOMY. RAIN HAS BEEN FALLING THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY DURING THE LAST MONTH AND HAS PICKED UP CONSIDERABLY IN VOLUME SINCE THE END OF JULY.

2. THE METEOROLOGICAL STATION IN BISSAU RECORDED, IN LESS THAN ONE DAY, THE NIGHT OF JULY 30-31, RAINFALL ALMOST EQUAL TO THE TOTAL FOR THE MONTH OF JULY. ALTHOUGH THE TOTAL FOR MAY EXCEEDED THE PROJECTION BY THREE TIMES WHAT WAS EXPECTED, THE MONTH OF JUNE WAS SOMEWHAT SHORT OF ANTICIPATED RAINFALL.

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3. THE CURRENT RAINFALL TOTALS ARE:

MAY 54.5MM

JUNE 113.6MM

JULY 507MM

4. IF THIS TREND HOLDS THROUGH SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, IT WILL ALLOW GB TO PARTIALLY RECOVER FROM THIS YEAR'S TREMENDOUS DECLINE IN AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION, WHICH HAS SERIOUSLY CRIPPLED THE ECONOMY. IN LATE JUNE AN OFFICIAL OF THE BISSAU STATE COMMITTEE NOTED THAT IT WAS CUSTOMARY TO HAVE A SHORTAGE OF MEAT DURING APRIL-MAY BUT THAT THIS YEAR THE SCARCITY IS MUCH MORE SERIOUS OWING TO THE LACK OF RAIN. THE DROUGHT HAS RESULTED IN A LACK OF WATER AND PASTURE FOR CATTLE WHOSE OWNERS HAVE TAKEN THEIR HERDS TO MORE REMOTE LOCATIONS IN AN ATTEMPT TO KEEP THEM ALIVE. FROM THESE AREAS IT IS DIFFICULT TO TRANSPORT CATTLE TO MARKET NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF INACCESSABILITY BUT ALSO DUE TO INSUFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION. CATTLE THAT ARE ON THEIR LAST LEGS OR THIN ARE BYPASSED BY BUTCHERS TRADING IN THE INTERIOR BUYING BEEF.

COMMENT: GOGB OFFICIALS HAVE THEIR FINGERS CROSSED IN ANTICIPATION THAT THIS TREND WILL CONTINUE. LOCAL FARMERS HAVE BEGUN TO PLANT RICE IN ALL SUITABLE AREAS AND EVERYONE HAS A WAIT AND SEE ATTITUDE. ORUM

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